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*2015 Perche Creek Flood*



*2019 Perche Creek Flood*

## **Perche Hills Neighborhood Coalition Demands Tabling of Final Approval for Overton Development**

*At stake is the future of the Perche Creek Flood Plain*

Columbia, Mo. – The Perche Hills Neighborhood Coalition, consisting of the majority of land and homeowners in the immediate area, was formed to prevent the unwise cascade of development across the Gillespie Bridge-Coats Lane floodplain.

The Coalition met with both City and County Planning and Zoning Commissions, then met with City Council members and County Commissioners, sent letters and emails, and made presentations at multiple City and County meetings.

“We have done everything we could to express our opposition to allowing unrestrained development in such a fragile area,” said Perche Hills Neighborhood Coalition spokesperson, Jana Stephens. “It is time for Columbia and all of Boone County to understand what is at stake.”

At each juncture, the cautions raised by the 35 households and 73 Coalition members have been ignored, allowing the 17-acre Overton development to proceed without regard to:

- o the overwhelming opposition of area residents compared to the six developer/landowners in support
- o the frequent, annual flooding of Gillespie Bridge Road documented by County records and permanently deployed road closure signs
- o the number of subdivision lots within the 100-year and 500-year floodplains
- o the impact of increasingly erratic weather and potential for even more frequent flooding events
- o the violation of a natural barrier to development across the western Columbia City Limit and Perche Creek
- o the developer’s intention to “fill in” a lake on the tract to allow for a subdivision street to be built over it

- o the impact of a doubled population on access to emergency services during flooding events that routinely prevent direct access to Columbia
- o the impact on road safety when adding two streets abutting Gillespie Bridge Road with dangerous site distances, blind hills, sharp curves, and increased traffic
- o the destruction of old-growth forest and significant loss of the County's rural and agricultural assets
- o and...the 661 acres of land along the Gillespie Bridge-Coats Lane corridor awaiting development when the first domino falls with final approval of the 34-home Overton Subdivision.

There remains one final step to preventing this irreversible loss to the citizens of Boone County and Columbia: the pending final October 29, 2019 vote of the Boone County Commission on the Overton plat.

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of local government to meet the needs of its citizens. When those needs conflict, it becomes the duty of local officials to weigh what is in the best, long-term interest of the majority—not what is easiest or what has been carefully orchestrated to meet minimum, outdated requirements, and not what serves the purely economic interests of the few.

The creation of a West Area Plan is the solution; it will allow for the time and citizen input required to make sound decisions on how development across the Perche Creek floodplain should progress; it will allow the City and County to plan together for its common future, as they should. Joint meetings of City and County staff have occurred to plan for its creation.

We therefore adamantly request that the Boone County Commission table final approval of the Overton Plat and suspend all further approval of development in the Gillespie Bridge-Coats Lane corridor pending creation of a joint City-County West Area Plan.

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